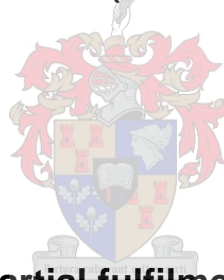


# **THE POST-LITERACY PERCEPTIONS OF NEWLY LITERATE ADULT LEARNERS AT A RURAL COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE**

by

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## **DECLARATION**

By submitting this thesis electronically, I hereby declare that the work contained therein is my own work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for obtaining a degree.

Date: 13 January 2012

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## **ABSTRACT**

Literature suggests that post-literacy (PL) is a seriously under-researched field in most African countries including South Africa. From the literature, it also became evident that, if PL is not viewed as a government priority, a gap will continue to exist between what PL programmes offer, and what the newly literate adults may need. Various authors emphasise the importance of PL to prevent relapsing into illiteracy, the applicability of PL in enhancing everyday private and occupational life, as well as the potential contribution of PL to poverty reduction, social, economic and political development and in sustaining communities. The aim of this study was to identify the PL perceptions of newly literate adults in the PL programme at the Simondium Community Learning Centre (SCLC) in the Western Cape of South Africa. A basic qualitative research approach to collect data was undertaken. During the data production ten semi-structured interviews were conducted, with the individual participant as the unit of analysis. All interviews were recorded digitally (using a tape recorder) and transcribed verbatim. Data analysis was done using the HyperQual computer programme to identify, retrieve, isolate and regroup data. The results and conclusions of data based on the literature studied and findings of the study indicate a learner-centred PL programme is required which focuses mainly on non-formal and vocational programmes for sustaining communities and economic development.

## OPSOMMING

Literatuur dui daarop dat nágeletterdheid (NG) is 'n ernstig onder nagevorsde gebied in die meeste Afrika-lande wat Suid Afrika insluit. Vanuit die literatuur het dit duidelik geblyk dat, as die regering nie NG as 'n prioriteit beskou nie, 'n gaping sal bly voortbestaan tussen dit wat nuutgeletterde volwassenes moontlik kan benodig en dit wat die program bied. Verskeie skrywers benadruk die belangrikheid van NG om 'n terugval na ongeletterdheid te voorkom, die toepaslikheid van NG om alledaagse private en beroepslewe te bevorder, asook NG se potensiële bydrae tot armoedeverligting, maatskaplike, ekonomiese en politieke ontwikkeling en by die volhoubaarheid van gemeenskappe. Die doel van hierdie studie was om die NG-persepsies van nuutgeletterde volwassenes in die NG-program by die Simondium Gemeenskapleersentrum (SGLS) in die Wes-Kaap van Suid-Afrika te identifiseer. 'n Basiese kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering is gebruik om data te versamel. Tydens die data versameling is tien semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude gebruik met die individuele deelnemer as die eenheid van analise. Alle onderhoude is digitaal deur 'n bandopnemer opgeneem en verbatim getranskribeer. Data-analise is gedoen deur gebruik te maak van die HyperQual-rekenaarprogram om data te identifiseer, te herroep, te isoleer en te hergroepeer. Die resultate en opsommings van data gabaseer op literatuur wat bestudeer is en die bevindinge van die studie, dui aan dat 'n leerder-gesentreerde NG program wat hoofsaaklik fokus op nie-formele en beroepsgerigte programme vir die volhoubaarheid van gemeenskappe en ekonomiese ontwikkeling, mag nodig wees binne die bestudeerde konteks.

## **DEDICATION**

### **I DEDICATE THIS WORK TO:**

My late parents, Jack (Jackie) and Mildred (Millie) van Wyk, who made a tremendous contribution in my life and had striven for my education.

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# CHAPTER 1

## ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In this chapter attention is given to the background and rationale of the study together with a statement of the research problem, the aim, objectives and significance of the study.

According to the White Paper on Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) of 2000 (Act 52) (RSA, DoE, 2000) the main purpose of public service providers, like the Simondium Community Learning Centre (SCLC), is to focus on basic reading, writing and numeric skills. After adult learners become literate, service providers need to address the following question: "What are the perceptions of newly literate adults in the PL programme at a rural community learning centre?"

Baatjes and Mathe (2004:402) argue that although PL was subsumed into the Department of Education's definition of ABET (RSA, DoE, 1997a), it is not a government priority. If PL is not viewed as a government priority, a gap may develop between what PL programmes offer, and what the newly literate adults may need (Rogers, 2002:165). This study aimed to explore the perceptions of a selected group of rurally based newly literate adults in order to highlight where such gaps may possibly exist in the PL programme.

Various authors emphasise the importance of PL for a variety of purposes. PL serves an important function to prevent relapsing into illiteracy (Rogers, Maddox, Millican, Newell Jones, Pagen & Robinson-Pant, 1999:7). Rogers (2002:162) is of the opinion that it is not only the basic literacy skills that will ensure the success of the PL programme, but also the applicability of PL in everyday private and occupational life. Oluoch (2005:4) emphasises the economic imperative of PL. He argues that basic literacy instruction alone cannot improve the livelihoods of participants and that it

should be accompanied by PL, income-generating activities and skills-training programmes. Oxenham (2004:5) adds that appropriately implemented PL programmes can contribute to reducing poverty, provided that all the necessary supporting conditions are satisfied. Torres (2004:21) emphasises the social imperative of PL. She argues that PL must be aimed at expanding the basic learning needs required for human satisfaction and for personal, family and community development.

PL is not only in need of attention in South Africa where there is evidently a lack of attention to PL-related issues; worldwide authors have reported on PL-related issues. While China has achieved considerable success in its efforts to raise PL levels, it is still experiencing problems such as delays in the implementation of PL policies, low quality of PL education, poor condition of facilities, relapse in illiteracy, rural poverty and high population growth rates (Guodong & Zhupeng, 2003:623). Rogers (2002:176) emphasises several reasons why the implementation of PL in India is experiencing difficulties. He argues that PL is seen as a time-bound stage of literacy and not as an ongoing programme, and that there are no real attempts to encourage the use of literacy outside the classroom in daily life. Drawing on the findings of a study based on PL in Latin America and the Caribbean, Torres (2008:557-558) states that PL programmes are generally organized for women causing men to feel marginalised. There also seems to be a continued lack of articulation between child literacy and adult literacy, and an increased reliance on technology (such as computers and televisions) with less face-to-face interaction by facilitators in the particular context. However, the picture is not that bleak everywhere. Thompson (2001:16) argues that major achievements were realised with the development of PL in Kenya, because an integrated approach was adopted to meet the PL needs of newly literate adults and out-of-school youth. This approach is supported by Torres (2008:543) who argues that PL programmes should be flexible to adapt, not only to the concrete needs of newly literate adults, but also to those of out-of school youth in different contexts and changing realities. She subsequently argues that both inside and outside the school system, out-of-school youth are often labelled as 'dropouts' and 'failures' and denied the right to educational opportunities throughout their lives.

Rogers et al. (1999) propose a variety of ways in which PL may be facilitated in more successful and sustainable ways, including:

- using real materials in the local language;
- focusing on functional literacy for economic, social and welfare benefits;
- promotion of independent learning; and
- the development of continuing education through a non-formal (life-related) and an alternative adult education curriculum linking education and action.

PL serves a variety of purposes that are important in facilitating economic development and sustaining communities. However, literature suggests that PL is a problematic and often neglected area of adult education. The reported literature indicates that PL is an important issue in adult education that warrants further investigation.

## **1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

As centre manager of SCLC for the past ten years, my main responsibilities included the daily management of the centre and teaching grade 12 learners. A teacher from the host institution, Simondium Primary School, was responsible for teaching the PL learners. It was during the last five years (2006-2010) that there was a gradual decrease in the enrolment of newly literate adults in the PL programme at SCLC (see Appendix G). Additionally, Aitchison and Alidou (2009:19) suggest that in South Africa, the drop-out rates of newly literate adults are high because the PL programme, consisting mainly of basic literacy and numeracy programmes, did not address their needs and social challenges. This made me realise that the basic literacy (ABET) programme seemed not to meet the PL perceptions of newly literate learners after they had completed the basic literacy programme. Although I have no evidence to support the latter hunch, it motivated me to explore the underlying perceptions of newly literate adults in the PL programme at SCLC. As PL is a seriously under-researched field in most African countries including South Africa (Aitchison & Alidou, 2009:54), a knowledge gap may exist regarding the PL perceptions of newly literate adults in PL programmes. After careful considering this background, it led to my research question which therefore was: "What are the perceptions of newly literate adults in the PL programme at a rural community learning centre?"

The sub-questions that followed were:

1. What are the characteristics of PL participants at the SCLC?
2. What are the PL perceptions of these participants about the PL programme at the SCLC?
3. How can programmes at SCLC be planned to address the identified issues better?

### **1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study is to identify the perceptions of newly literate adults in the PL programme at SCLC in order to provide guidelines for programme improvement.

### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- to identify the PL participants' perceptions of the influence of the PL programme on their lives at SCLC;
- to uncover the needs of newly literate adults at SCLC;
- to identify the gaps in PL provision at SCLC; and
- to provide guidelines to improve the PL programme at SCLC.

### **1.5 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

As PL is an under-researched field in many African countries including South Africa, further research was needed that addresses the perceived knowledge gap that may exist on the PL perceptions of newly literate adult learners in South Africa.

### **1.6 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

The findings of this study may contribute towards a learner-centred PL programme that addresses the perceptions of newly literate adult learners at the SCLC.

## **1.7 SUMMARY**

The following is an outline of the research report

### **Chapter one: Orientation to the study**

Chapter 1 attempted to provide a background for the research and to clarify the research problem, the aim, objectives, rationale and possible contribution of the study.

### **Chapter two: Literature review**

This chapter outlines the conceptual framework for the study by providing a literature exploration with regard to information of relevant literature study that presents a scholarly view on the research problem. Aspects such as key terminology and the positioning of PL within the different education systems form part of this focus. The role of PL in empowerment and environments that may support PL, are also to be explored. A description of literacy skills training and community development initiatives in a South African context, are also provided in this chapter. The conceptual framework also serves as a lens for data analysis.

### **Chapter three: Research methodology**

In Chapter 3 attention will be given to a discussion of the research design and method that were followed to investigate the research problem.

### **Chapter four: Results and discussion**

In Chapter 4 attention will be given to a presentation and discussion of results based on data generated and analysed in this study.

### **Chapter five: Findings, conclusions and implications**

In Chapter 5 attention will be given to the implications that the reported results may have for theory, policy and practice.



## CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the literature-relevant research question: "What are the perceptions of newly literate adults in the PL programme at a rural community learning centre?"

Literature suggests that community learning centres (CLCs) in South Africa focus too much on the standard basic literacy programme (generally called Adult Basic Education and Training, or ABET) and not enough on addressing the PL needs of newly literate adults (Baatjes & Mathe, 2004:402).

Lind (2002:23) argues that '*Basic Education*' (ABET in this case) currently often refers to just primary education, sometimes including secondary education. Basic literacy therefore is about learning to read and write (text and numbers), reading and writing to learn, and developing these skills and using them effectively for meeting basic needs (Lind, 2002:23).

According to Torres (2004:16) the term *ABLE* (Adult Basic and Literacy Education) is preferred to ABET by international policy makers, because ABLE is more precise and broader as it stresses the importance of learning both in and beyond educational provision: learning in the family, in the community, at work, with friends, through the mass media, learning by observing, by doing, by teaching and participating. The concept of post-literacy (PL) is used to describe the follow-up and sustaining of the initial acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills to assist newly literates to retain, improve and apply their basic knowledge, skills and attitudes for satisfaction of their needs and to permit them to continue through a self-directed process of improvement of quality of life (UNESCO, 2000:43). Torres (2004:16) suggests that PL is practiced mainly in the 'South' which includes developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. She subsequently argues that the goal of PL continues to be human development and not merely poverty alleviation.

Rogers (2002:162) is of the opinion that it is not only the basic literacy skills that will ensure the success of the PL programme, but also the applicability of PL in everyday private and occupational life. He argues that few people has benefitted from learning basic literacy skills only; people rather benefit from using their PL skills to achieve some purpose after they had become literate. As such, PL serves a variety of purposes that are crucial for economic development and sustaining communities.

The importance of PL as part of economic and community development needs to be framed within a broader understanding of what it means to become literate in adulthood. It is therefore important to understand the differences in meaning and relationships between the concepts *basic literacy*, *functional literacy*, *post-literacy*, *continuing education* (CE) and *vocational education*. The positioning of PL within formal, informal and non-formal education (NFE) is also discussed. The chapter will furthermore explore the role of post-literacy in empowerment and environments that may support PL, such as community learning centres.

## **2.2 DEFINING KEY TERMINOLOGY**

### **2.2.1 Basic literacy**

*Basic literacy* is a diverse concept which is defined differently in different parts of the world. The Malawian definition of basic literacy is "the ability of an individual to read or write a simple statement in Chichewa, English or any other language" (UNESCO, 2005:269). The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), on the other hand, states that basic literacy is about learning to write (text and numbers) and also about reading and developing these skills and using them effectively for meeting basic needs (2005,158). Torres (2004:21) concurs with the latter view of SIDA, by stressing that basic literacy must be understood as the foundation or essential education aimed at meeting and expanding the basic learning needs required for human satisfaction and development. Basic literacy in this context is viewed as a prerequisite for adult learners to become literate and for learning and personal development to occur.

Lynch (1997:190) argues that basic literacy is neither an entry requirement, nor necessary for someone to learn and that the facilitation of adult learning can be

provided without first teaching learners to read and write. Rogers (2001:10) calls this a 'literacy-comes-second' approach whereby adults will be able to start with sustainable developmental activities aimed at income-generation, environmental enhancement, farming of fishing practices, and improving health without first learning basic literacy skills. The latter approach is an example of functional literacy (FL) which is literacy for economic, political and social empowerment for individuals and communities as a whole (Obanya, 2003:4).

Appelquist and Björkman (2010:6) argue that these different ways of viewing basic literacy is important for research, because it makes the concept abstract and questionable. They are of the opinion that to understand the meanings and views of basic literature a more concrete view is needed. Recent literature suggests that it is possible to provide at least two different viewpoints to substantiate the latter argument. Kachala (2007:6) argues that the reading culture is the base to greater passion of every individual's inner self and that basic literacy is the key to development (Kachala, 2007:8). He asserts that those who are literate are more likely to use modern farming methods, follow family planning methods and are active in community development. This argument points to the importance of basic literacy in initiating development within communities. Street (2001:291), on the other hand, argues that basic literacy is not the key to development, as Kachala puts it, but rather a part of the development. He argues that there has been too much focus on basic literacy as empowering, meaning that participants of different literacy projects might become literate but not empowered. Street (2001:296) expresses the complexity of literacy by stating:

*You may learn to read the high literacy texts of a culture or you may learn to read the functional texts in which agency messages are inscribed, but in both cases the reading alone and the knowledge associated with that reading do not lead to empowerment, unless one also has the ability to transform that knowledge into a currency that is powerful in that social context.*

### 2.2.2 Post-literacy

Rogers et al. (1999:21) argue that most scholars and planners see the progression from illiterate to literate as being linear, a series of phases similar to learning in primary school. They view PL as parts of a lifelong learning (LLL) continuum from basic literacy, to PL and to continuing education (CE). Omolewa (1998:2), however, argues that basic literacy and PL overlap, culminating in CE for literacy permanence - as it is understood in the Nigerian context. According to Rogers (2001:19), the traditional approach currently adopted in many programmes views PL as a second-stage activity, something that comes after the basic literacy. He views PL as some further period of teaching or guided learning building up to full literacy. Rogers (2001:19) subsequently proposes the following ways to facilitate this PL building phase:

- the production of simple or easy-reading texts which are suitable to adult learners at the initial stages of literacy development;
- the use of simple words and phrases first, followed by more complex words and phrases; and
- the provision of PL should cater for smaller groups of adult learners than the initial literacy provision, normally one PL centre for every ten literacy classes.

Fiedrich (1996:7) argues that the concept of PL is based on the assumption that newly literate adults quickly relapse into illiteracy if they do not have any meaningful ways of using their skills. He argues that even though the empirical evidence on the relapse of PL is at best incomplete, the position that PL is crucial to the success of a literacy programme has become common place among literacy practitioners. According to Guodong and Zhupeng (2003:626), PL serves the needs of newly literate adults by consolidating the gains of basic literacy and promoting economic and social development so as to meet the challenges of present and future societies, especially in rural areas.

### 2.2.3 Functional literacy

Collins and O'Brien (2003:148) define functional literacy (FL) as the level of skill needed to function fully in society so as to meet personal and social needs. Additionally, in the '*Literacy for life*' document, published by UNESCO (2005:151), it is implicated that FL is diverse and affected by many factors, such as cultural and social environments. UNESCO defines functionally literate persons as people who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of their groups and communities and also for enabling them to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for their individual development and that of the community.

Obanya (2003:4) argues that FL programmes for adult learners should emphasise literacy for empowerment so that improved quality of life, self-discovery, enhanced income-earning potentials and improved ability to make reasoned choices on matters affecting their lives are possible. According to him, the most important focus in an FL programme, is that the programme should result in an improved capacity for marginalised, rural and urban poor people to become fully involved in reading and literacy programmes that directly touch their lives, e.g. though participation in democratic elections. Additionally, Meskel (2000:3) proposes that the content of FL programmes should be based on the practical needs of the rural community in terms of agriculture, animal husbandry, health environmental protection, skills training, basic literacy, handicrafts, fishery and wildlife.

### 2.2.4 Continuing education

UNESCO (2000:12) defines the concept of continuing education (CE) as the "learning opportunities all people want or need outside of basic literacy and primary education". Rogers, et al. (1999:22) argue that for some service providers who view PL as distinct from CE and not incorporating CE, the end product of PL is to lead into CE in classes of various kinds. They are of the opinion that for these service providers PL is a form of access into CE. Such a view of the link between PL and CE positions PL as a bridge course which will prepare newly literate adults to enter further forms of educational provision. These forms of education may include:

- non-formal education (defined as a life-related curriculum which has no or little equivalency to the formal primary school curriculum);
- continuing education (an alternative basic education curriculum which has direct equivalency value with the formal system of primary education); or
- the formal primary education system itself.

### **2.2.5 Vocational education**

According to Leowarin (2010:8), vocational education is an educational system that combines literacy, numeracy and life skills programmes with work and management skills, as well as the application of technology in careers. She is of the opinion that these programmes can be provided through CLCs, but are often more effective, when local craftsmen and businesses sponsor apprenticeships. Oxenham (2005:11) argues that despite the long-standing concern, actual financial provision by the state and the private sector has been modest. Atchoarena (2004:10) suggests that the situation has not improved in recent times even though numerous initiatives have been taken by different actors, both in the public and private sectors, to provide vocational skills training. According to Ooijens, Espinoza and Vergara (2000:176) a more holistic view has been developed with a 6-year project in Honduras that envisages the following three components for skills training in rural areas:

- an educational component, which comprises literacy and an appropriate form of liberal education;
- a technical component, which covers training in production, organization and management; and
- a third component which uses the principle of 'learning by doing' to suggest undertaking social and productive income-generating projects.

From this section, it became evident that for PL to become important for economic and community development, it is important to understand the differences in meaning between the concepts of basic literacy, functional literacy, post-literacy, continuing education (CE) and vocational education.

### **2.3 DETERMINING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BASIC LITERACY, POST-LITERACY, CONTINUING EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

The preceding discussion highlighted the different ways in which basic literacy, post-literacy, continuing education and vocational education can be defined. In practice, these different forms of education are closely related and the following section will discuss the possible relationships that may exist. Table I summarises the objectives as defined in the concepts of basic literacy, PL, CE and vocational education (VE), which depend on the relationship which PL seems to have to basic literacy which precedes it, and on the perceived nature of the goal to which PL is aimed.

**Table 2.1: Relationships between basic literacy, post-literacy, continuing education and vocational education (adapted from Rogers et al., 1999:16)**

STAGE 1 ←	STAGE 2 →	STAGE 3 →	STAGE 4
Basic Literacy	Post-Literacy	Continuing Education	Vocational Education
Becoming literate	Towards autonomous learning	After autonomous learning	After autonomous learning
Literacy enhancement	Intermediate activities	Future-orientated activities	Future-orientated activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Reinforcement of basic literacy skills</li> <li>➤ Catching up programmes</li> <li>➤ Independent reading</li> <li>➤ Materials' production</li> <li>➤ Individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Functional literacy</li> <li>➤ Income-generation</li> <li>➤ Individuals or groups</li> <li>➤ Integration with other development programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Wider curriculum</li> <li>➤ Formal education</li> <li>➤ Informal education</li> <li>➤ Non-formal education</li> <li>➤ Group formation</li> <li>➤ Livelihood skills training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Knowledge about occupations</li> <li>➤ Management skills</li> <li>➤ Application of technology</li> <li>➤ Personal and work ethics</li> <li>➤ Group formation</li> </ul>
Time →			

In Table 2.1 arrows are used to show the path of the LLL continuum. Quane (1990:14) argues that it has become 'normal' to take a comprehensive view of PL which considers basic literacy, post-literacy and continuing education as parts of a lifelong learning continuum, comprising basic literacy to post-literacy to continuing education and beyond.

Table 2.1 illustrates that some PL programmes are primarily back-ward-looking, relating to the technical literacy skills acquisition elements of basic literacy, using PL to reinforce the literacy skills and preventing what is often called a 'relapse into illiteracy'. The other programmes are primarily forward-looking, relating to the next stage or phase in the development continuum, however that phase may be defined. Robinson-Pant (1998:5), highlights the uncertainty of the latter two views on PL development by stressing that for the majority of agencies, PL means a future-orientated package, while other providers suggest that there is no real difference between basic and post-literacy. Robinson-Pant (1998) is of the opinion that many PL programmes seek to do both, however, contradictory this approach may become.



Four groups of PL activities can be identified in Table 2.1. For those service providers who look backwards to the basic literacy programmes, the focus falls mainly on promoting individualism through independent reading (in local libraries) and enhancing basic literacy skills through the provision of specially written materials (texts) for helping the participants to practice their reading (Rogers et al., 1999:14).

The second set of activities comprises what may be called intermediate activities for those service providers who are looking forward to address the needs of adults from becoming literate moving towards autonomous learners. According to UNESCO (2000:6) the concept of a self-directed or autonomous learner refers to someone who is willing to learn on his own, and who perceives education as rewarding only if it helps in seeing things in a variety of ways and with true feeling and respect for the views of others. Forward-looking programmes focus on functional literacy and aim to enhance group formation to prepare for the establishment of self-help groups leading to income-generation to increase income. Courses run in Nepal to train women in establishing women's savings groups (Robinson-Pant, 1998:2) serve as an example of such a self-help group. Leowarin (2010:7) argues that such PL activities can be integrated into the teaching-learning process with other development programmes such as agriculture, community development, health and HIV/Aids prevention.

The third set of activities comprises what may be called 'future-orientated activities' for those service providers who are looking forward to address the PL needs of newly literate adults after becoming autonomous learners. A wider curriculum is offered, which includes formal, informal and non-formal education. Rogers et al. (1999:8) argue that some PL programmes lead to CE and encourage group activity. In addition, Oxenham, Diallo, Kathoire, Petkova-Mwangi and Sall (2002:8), argue that livelihood skills-training is essential for participants involved in such PL programmes to provide additional income and sustainable opportunities to their families.

The fourth set of activities also comprises what may be called 'future-orientated activities' for those service providers who are looking forward to address the PL needs of newly literate adults after becoming autonomous learners. According to Leowarin (2010:8), these activities form part of vocational educational programmes that offer knowledge and understanding regarding occupations with work and management skills, as well as the application of technology in participants' careers.

In addition, she argues that these programmes also tend to promote group working, the development of personal ethics and morals in occupational conduct enhancing a fulfilled life inside communities (Leowarin, 2010:9).

In the next section, the concept of post-literacy within formal, informal and non-formal education will be discussed.

## **2.4 POST-LITERACY WITHIN FORMAL, INFORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION**

Some literacy agencies view PL as leading into CE, and thus as separate entities from CE. Where such a distinction is drawn, CE would seem to refer to those learning programmes designed for participants to obtain access to the formal, non-formal and informal education systems (Rogers, et al., 1999:22). A discussion of the different types of CE and how it is linked with PL will follow.

### **2.4.1 Formal education**

According to UNESCO (2000:6), the term *formal education* refers to educational programmes offered by educational institutions, such as schools, universities and colleges who usually award certificates of attainment (such as certificates, diplomas and degrees) – and who have standards and grades. According to UNESCO (2000:5), PL programmes sometimes aim to prepare learners to enter the formal educational systems at pre-defined grades. In addition, Aitchison and Alidou (2009:18) argue that these PL programmes consolidate basic literacy skills and try to prevent their attrition through non-use, and it is usually overseen by Departments of Adult Education and run at local CLC's (often part of the formal school system).

### **2.4.2 Non-formal education**

According to Aitchison and Alidou (2009:19), non-formal education is a particularly slippery term as it can mean any education carried on outside the formal school and higher education system, except vocational training, or any other any other education that is not certified. Non-formal systems cater for adults who have not previously attended any formal education programmes, or who have prematurely dropped out of such programmes. According to UNESCO (2000:7) these programmes can be

thought of as providing 'catching up' opportunities for adults and usually include literacy training for re-entering the formal educational system. Non-formal education encompasses a variety of programmes that promote basic literacy and basic non-formal education.

According to Leowarin (2010:8), programmes that promote basic literacy helps youth and adults learn how to read and write, together with basic knowledge on mathematics (numeracy) within their communities. She stresses that these participants are also expected to communicate daily with each other and that the course will follow an integrated approach with basic knowledge about agriculture, community development, health, environment, HIV/Aids prevention integrated into the teaching-learning process.

Leowarin (2010:7) argues that the curriculum for basic non-formal education at the CLCs will be designed related to various subjects, namely: social studies, science, public health and nutrition. In addition to these subjects, she proposes that other learning support materials such as audio tapes, video tapes and slides be integrated in a self-instructional package.

A finding from a study conducted by Kell (1996) in the Western Cape of South Africa, shows that the curriculum for newly literate adult learners at CLCs should include non-formal education programmes to assist those wishing to get a driver's license, book-keeping for small business and managing a bank account.

Guodong and Zhupeng (2003:628) recommend that agriculture production, technology, adult education and skills training should be better integrated into PL programmes at CLC's to meet the PL needs of newly literate adult learners.

### **2.4.3 Informal education**

UNESCO (2000:7) refers to informal education as education that occurs either incidentally or in societal institutions other than provided by formal and non-formal sectors. Work experience, independent reading, observation of natural phenomena, attendance at CLCs, use of hobbies, interaction with mass media, and the casual use of libraries, museums and galleries are all examples of informal education.

In addition to these examples of informal education, NGO's play an important role in post-literacy, often by way of producing reading materials for newly literates, in some cases generated by the learners themselves, for example in Kenya (Aitchison & Alidou, 2009:18). According to Aitchison & Alidou (2009:19), the Kenya Post Literacy Programme (KPLP) did provide opportunities for newly literate graduates to continue learning after completing the basic literacy programme.

The important role that post-literacy plays in the empowerment of individuals and communities will be discussed in the following section.

## 2.5 THE ROLE OF POST-LITERACY IN EMPOWERMENT

Viewing literacy as a social practice embedded in power relations and mediated by institutions and social structures, National Literacy Studies (NLS) scholars emphasise that literacy does not have uniform effects on individuals, communities or societies (Betts, 2003; Robinson-Pant, 2004; Street, 2001). Rather, they promote adapting literacy programmes to existing and desired literacy practices of participants (Rogers, 2001:221). Stromquist (2009:1) points out that while there is universal consensus that formal schooling is imperative for children and youths, many people and institutions are ambivalent about the need of basic education for adults who, for a variety of reasons, were not able to develop literacy skills. She is of the opinion that for newly literate adults to fully function in all areas of their personal, social, economic and political life, they need to become empowered so as to develop their PL capabilities. In the context of adult education, empowerment means the set of knowledge and skills that produce the ability to participate in one's social environment and bring about change on how politics are viewed (Stromquist, 2009:2). According to Stromquist, this ability can be seen as comprising the following four dimensions:

- *Cognitive dimension* (or the knowledge of one's social reality and the mechanisms that make it function the way it does);
- *Economic dimension* (or access to independent means of financial support which make individuals more autonomous in their decisions);

- *Socio-political dimension* (or the skills to participate in and modify institutions and policies of one's community or nation);
- *Psychological dimension* (or feelings that individuals are competent, worthy of better conditions and capable of taking action on their own behalf).

Subsequently, Stromquist argues that, while no linear sequence can be stated about these four dimensions, it would seem that the psychological dimension-operating on a personal level often functions as a fundamental prerequisite for the other three dimensions. A discussion of the different dimensions of empowerment will follow.

### **2.5.1 Cognitive dimension**

Stromquist (2009:5) argues that cognitive empowerment can occur through literacy programmes when newly literate adults continue their PL development by increasing their knowledge regarding political parties as well as in voting and participating in community and group activities. She argues that in several instances, women in PL programmes develop greater understanding of gender discrimination and inequities in their society such as women's rights.

Recent literature suggests that illiteracy is one of the main reasons why people cannot develop themselves cognitively (Paixão, 2009; Pearce, 2009). According to these writers illiteracy is higher in societies with low levels of modernity and very low access to formal basic education, such as in Latin America and Africa. Stromquist (2009:6) argues that since illiteracy is experienced in diverse social contexts, it is important to provide content and meaning to that diversity. She states that at least three distinct groups emerge: youths who seek to complete their formal education and for whom literacy programmes can provide a door to re-enter their schooling; young housewives who seek literacy programmes to improve themselves and their families and to gain autonomy; and older individuals who want to experience greater knowledge of their environment.

### **2.5.2 Economic dimension**

Throughout the world, illiteracy coincides with poverty and it affects, in general, the most disadvantaged, namely rural areas, women, indigenous populations and older people (Torres, 2008:545). According to Thompson (2001:6) economic

empowerment of participants in PL programmes can serve as an effective strategy for poverty reduction. According to him, poverty is the inability to provide basic material goods, sufficient medical services and adequate educational facilities which manifest in phenomena such as social exclusion, shortage of income, deprivation in knowledge (e.g. illiteracy), low life expectancy, poor quality of life and lack of material goods (Thompson, 2001:5). Oxenham et al. (2002:2) argue that income-generating activities and livelihood training need to be incorporated alongside their PL programmes so as to empower newly literate adults to reduce poverty in their communities. The concepts of livelihood training and income-generation activities are not synonymous (Thompson, 2002:8). A report on a project in Egypt makes the distinction between the latter two concepts as follows:

*Quite often the needs assessment identified the need for income-generation opportunities of which vocational training might be part...An additional challenge is not to confuse income-generation with livelihood (vocational) training. Both are often important, but people developing vocational skills often need further support (such as with credit scheme and marketing) to be able to generate income (UKDFID, 1999: 8.4.3, 8.4.8).*

Aitchison and Alidou (2009:24) refers to the concept of *livelihood training* as mainly an integration of non-formal vocational training and functional literacy programmes (for example on gardening, poultry care, craft making, basic home care, and so on), which are related to livelihoods and poverty alleviation.

Thompson (2002:4) says the enrolment of newly literate adults at CLCs increased when the Department of Adult Education (DAE) in Kenya included income-generating activities into their PL programme. According to the DAE, it was observed that centres with income-generating programmes registered more learners due to a high motivation as skills learnt were put into use and the income generated helped learners to solve some of their domestic problems (Thompson, 2002:7).

Oxenham (2005:8) argues that as the overwhelming majority of enrolled adults at CLCs come from the poorer sections of a society-, literacy as well as post-literacy programmes is self-targeting on those who should benefit from poverty reduction. With regard to return on investment, the World Bank undertook studies in Ghana and Bangladesh (World Bank, 1999:11; 2001:49). According to the latter studies, the

Ghanaian study estimated a private rate of return of 43% for females and 24% for males, along with a social return of 18% for females and 14% for males. The Bangladeshi study estimated that the average private rate of return might be high as 27%. Oxenham (2005:8) argues that, however debatable these estimates, they suggest that the investments in literacy programmes are productive and that what poor people learn from literacy programmes does help to reduce poverty.

Literature shows that in Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world, the involvement of the private sector in adult education can assist with the economic and social empowerment of illiterate adults, of whom the majority is women. According to Powers (2006:5) the involvement of Fonkoze, Haiti's largest micro-finance institution, assisted women to gain essential tools in basic literacy; sexual and reproductive health and business skills to better manage their money and take control of their lives. All of Fonkoze's training programmes are based on the Freirian principles which build on the rich tradition of participatory or 'popular' education across Latin America and the Caribbean (Freire, 2003).

For six years (2000-2005), the reach, depth and quality of PL programmes at the Fonkoze project have increased dramatically. In 2000, basic literacy and business skills training were offered to a total of 2 362 newly literate adult learners. In 2005, with a broader range of programmes including health training, more than 7 600 newly literates enrolled in the Fonkoze project. Although classes in health training were not offered during 2000 and 2001, there was a gradual increase in learner enrolment from 43 to 289 for the periods 2003 to 2005. It seems that addressing the PL needs of adult learners led to an increase in enrolment in the Fonkoze project. According to the adult learners, the Fonkoze's educational project helped them to gain freedom by teaching them how to-

- write their own names;
- increase opportunities and equality for and among women;
- gain greater financial independence and decrease dependency on their spouses;
- have greater confidence in themselves as business women;



- repay their loans on time;
- thinking critically to solve problems in their lives;
- stay healthy, hopeful and focused; and
- feel empowered (Powers, 2006:5).

In spite of these benefits, Powers (2006:6) argues that the stability and growth of Fonkoze's educational programmes remains threatened due to the lack of secure funding. Stromquist (2009:6) concurs with the latter view and adds that the economic empowerment is less likely to emerge from PL programmes because it is highly depended on access to credit and income-generation policies for which governmental support are essential.

### **2.5.3 Socio-political dimension**

The socio-political dimension of empowerment has been found to emerge among newly literate adults, particularly in their participation in activities such as elections and community-level decision-making (Stromquist, 2009:6). In addition, Appelquist and Björkman (2010:13) emphasise that the basic skills of reading, writing and being numerate, create a personal empowerment for individuals, while FL in addition to the theory of 'conscientisation' should benefit the whole community. According to Glass (2001:19), Freire uses the term conscientisation to capture 'the complex ethical-political features of education as a practice of freedom'. Glass (2001:19) distinguishes two kinds of knowledge in Freire's theory: the everyday knowledge of experience, called the 'common sense of the masses' and the systematic knowledge of science, called the 'trained sense of intellectuals'. Freire called this 'critical knowledge' or 'critical consciousness', and it means that a person should be able to ask meaningful questions to really be non-oppressed (Freirian Dictionary, 2010). Glass writes that education, as viewed in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 2003), is important as it can help the oppressed to understand concrete problems in their lives and to be open for learning opportunities in order to empower themselves politically (Glass, 2001:17).



Quigley, Folinsbee, and Kraglund-Gauthier (2006) argue that women who are illiterate in oppressive social contexts, often experience violence, isolation and discrimination. Stromquist (2009:7) argues that literacy classes can play a positive and meaningful role in providing women with legitimately sanctioned and valuable opportunities to learn of their history, rights, self-esteem, leadership and organisational skills. Family literacy programmes can be beneficial to both children and mothers. These programmes are used in countries like South Africa and Turkey to enable parents, especially mothers, to take a more supportive role in their children's schooling (Oxenham, 2004:9).

#### **2.5.4 Psychological dimension**

Stromquist (2009:5) suggests that the most common type of empowerment is identified as feelings of self-esteem and self-confidence, which shows that literacy often leads to psychological empowerment. She is of the opinion that self-esteem can be considered a personal condition, which precedes social and political action. She argues that an individual's heightened sense of confidence can function as an invisible armour that prepares one to undertake action that may introduce risks but also intended results. Bingham (2000:8), who conducted case studies of 10 persons in adult programmes in the United States of America, found that PL learners tended to participate mostly in local forms of organisations and reported greater self-esteem than they had before, with responses such as "feeling better about myself" and "feeling like I am somebody".

### **2.6 LITERACY SKILLS TRAINING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

In a study conducted by Botha and Van der Merwe (1999), they noted that disadvantaged communities in South Africa, especially those in rural areas suffer as a result of poverty, largely due to unemployment. Consequently the Development and Advancement of Rural Entrepreneurship (DARE) programme was launched in 1999 focusing on the training of entrepreneurs through various projects in the rural community of Darling in Western Cape of South Africa (Albertyn et al., 2010:25). A study by Perold (2003), confirmed that activities at the Darling Focus Centre (DFC) dwindled when the facilitator left during 2002. Findings from studies by Le Roux

(2003) and Langenhoven (2004) showed that this led to a drop in attendance figures, resulting in programmes coming to an end at the DFC. A possible reason for programmes coming to an end at the DFC could be that the community's needs were not being met. Findings from a study by Coetzee (2004) showed that those respondents at the DFC with primary education, who were unemployed, preferred computer skills training, job training, and technical skills training, while those with no education preferred needlework and basic literacy education programmes.

Studies by South African authors (Albertyn, Botha, Van der Merwe, Le Roux & Coetzee, 2010; Langenhoven, 2004; Perold, 2003) have shown that in the context of rural communities, the introduction of non-formal adult education and skills development programmes may lead to empowering a disadvantaged, resource-restricted group and enhance their capacity in meeting the needs and expectations. The South African studies mentioned in this paragraph, have shown that by applying a literacy approach whereby adults will be able to start with sustainable developmental activities aimed at income generation without first learning basic literacy skills. According to Rogers (2001:10), the latter approach is called 'literacy comes second'. Scott-Goldman (2001:6) argues that the curriculum and methods used in adult education classes, despite the best intentions of the educators, can actually be disempowering. Kell (1996:251) is in agreement with the latter argument as she is of the opinion that adult learners do not always question the applicability of the curriculum or methods used in adult education classes for all the extensive skills and authority they may display in other domains in their lives. In addition, Kell (1996:252) is of the opinion that in the present adult education system, older learners will not necessarily succeed as it attempts to take them through a process of acquiring school-based literacy practices.

Scott-Goldman (2001:7) argues that there should be a formal adult system of accredited learning programmes for those who wish to build up qualifications and pursue long-term careers. In addition, she proposes a more informal, responsive provision to assist PL adult learners to carry out communication tasks because they want to be able to perform it in their daily lives in a South African development context (Scott-Goldman, 2001:19).

Recent research by UNESCO (2008) has shown that basic literacy education is a key factor in a country's development and that investment by non-governmental organisations play an important role in this regard. This finding differs from Rogers' view (Rogers, 2001:10) regarding his 'literacy comes second' approach as a prerequisite for developmental activities to occur, as mentioned in a previous paragraph. According to UNESCO (2008:1), Operation Upgrade (OpUp) - with financial and technical support from many international organisations such as Oxfam Australia, ProLiteracy Worldwide International and local chapters of Rotary International - has been working with poor people since 2003 through the Adult Literacy and Skills Training Programme (ALSTP) in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. The ALSTP is a multi-faceted family-based literacy and development project that is being implemented in socially disadvantaged and remote rural areas such as the KwaNibela Project, and primarily targets women-and to some extent, men, children and youth-aged 25 to 50 (UNESCO, 2008:2). According to UNESCO (2008:3), the KwaNibela Project won the 2008 UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy.

Using an integrated approach to literacy skills training and community development, the ALSTP offers mother-tongue literacy, English as second language, numeracy and theme-based training in:

- livelihood development;
- income-generation;
- food production/security and preservation;
- health education: HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, childcare, home-based care for the sick, reproductive health, nutrition and sanitation;
- civic/life skills education;
- human rights, gender relations, conflict management and resolution; and
- sustainable environmental conservation (UNESCO, 2008:2).

According to UNESCO (2008:4), the ALSTP endeavours to develop and implement a structured literacy programme that is relevant to learners' needs and thereby

empowering them cognitively, socially, economically and politically. Despite the positive impact that the ALSTP has had, its success continues to be marred by practical challenges arising primarily from lack of adequate funding (UNESCO, 2008:9).

## **2.7 SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF POST-LITERACY PROGRAMMES**

Andrew (2009:1) suggests that PL cannot occur unless there are resources and facilities as well as positive educational environments that are conducive to a culture of teaching and learning. According to him, positive learning environments are places where PL learners feel comfortable with themselves, safe amongst their peers and motivated to learn. A discussion of the various factors, influencing the development of a supportive educational environment within CLCs to improve the delivery of quality PL programmes, follows.

### **2.7.1 The influence of facilitators**

The key to a successful adult learning group is a facilitator who can engage the learners to spend sufficient time on a task to ensure their mastery of the skills and knowledge in the curriculum (Oxenham, 2005:13). He argues that the ideal facilitator would combine the following qualities: reliability, competence in the subject matter, methods and skills, rapport with learners, and the ability to sustain interest and engagement. Highly qualified facilitators for adult literacy and livelihood skills, however, are still scarce (Oluoch, 2005:2). It is sometimes believed that schoolteachers make ineffective literacy facilitators for adults because they do not have the necessary knowledge and skills to facilitate adult learning. Oxenham (2005:14) argues that evidence from several countries contradicts this view and says that in some countries schoolteachers have been the mainstay of PL programmes for isolated rural communities for many years.

Torres (2008:558) is concerned about the increased reliance on technology (such as computers and televisions) with less face-to-face interaction by facilitators in classes. Leowarin (2010:8), on the other hand, argues that modern technical knowledge (e.g. English and computer learning via community internet), is essential requirements for

the promotion of local capital policy. In addition to the latter issues relating to the role of facilitators, Oluoch (2005:5) proposes the following strategies to support adult facilitators:

- training of facilitators should be strengthened through professional in-service-training sessions;
- particular attention is needed to develop pedagogical skills to enable facilitators to view adult learners as active participants and not as passive trainees;
- centre managers should also be trained in how to motivate facilitators and how to work with community members and partners so that CLCs are made to be integral parts of the larger community;
- the proportion of full-time facilitators should be increased to enhance professional development; and
- the salaries and other remuneration for literacy personnel should be increased to boost their morale.

In addition to the latter strategies, UNESCO (2008:5) proposes that facilitators should be encouraged to use real-life and relevant examples as the basis for interactive and participatory teaching-learning methods during PL classes such as problem-solving, role play, drama, music, dance, story-telling and group discussions.

### **2.7.2 Support structures for learners**

Moral and curriculum support are two of the major factors to ensure the delivery of quality adult literacy and livelihood skills programmes. According to Oxenham (2005:14), moral support from community leaders can be helpful in sustaining the courage of faltering learners. In addition, Oluoch (2005:1) is of the opinion that it is important that supervisors visit CLCs regularly to assist these faltering students. According to Oluoch (2005:2), the primary role of supervisors is to enhance quality of curriculum delivery and instruction. He, however, argues that supervisors only visit CLCs to check on the facilitators' performance, and they cannot give direction on instructional activities and ways to improve the quality of the centre's operation

(Oluoch, 2005:3). According to Oxenham (2005:14), it is good practice for officials, supervisors and facilitators to attend recurrent brief training sessions to strengthen their initial training so as to ensure and sustain the development of quality PL.

### **2.7.3 Teaching and learning materials**

Recent literature shows that the provision of learning materials is important to ensure that facilitators succeed in helping their learners to make progress towards achieving their learning goals. Oluoch (2005:2) argues that reading materials (primers) and posters were not relevant for the purpose of facilitating adult learning, but rather suitable for teaching school children. In addition he argues that the facilitators had no guides or reference materials to guide them, which led to a lack of detailed content, sequence, uniformity and standardised teaching. Oxenham (2005:14) argues that facilitators should know in advance what learning materials learners wish to learn in order to meet their needs and to establish what they already know.

Scott-Goldman (2001:17) proposes the REFLECT approach for PL programmes at CLCs within a non-formal development context. According to the Freirian Dictionary (2010), the acronym REFLECT means Regenerated Freirian Literacy through empowering Community Techniques. Archer (2000:260) argues that in a REFLECT programme, there are no pre-printed materials other than the learning materials, such as maps, matrices, calendars and diagrams, developed by the adult learners in collaboration with adult learners. According to him these learning materials represent local reality and they systematise the existing knowledge of adult learners pertaining to local issues (Archer, 2000).

### **2.7.4 Facilities**

Although some countries have their own CLCs, the majority of adult literacy instruction still occurs mainly in schools because of insufficient budgets. Oluoch (2005:5) proposes that where possible, communities, aid agencies and the government of a country could be asked to construct CLCs separate from primary schools so that adult learners have their own institutions. In addition to the latter proposal, he argues that these CLCs should be purpose-built (e.g. appropriate seating, toilet facilities and blackboards) for adults so as to ensure the development of a positive teaching and learning climate.

### **2.7.5 Assessment and certification**

Oxenham (2005:14) is of the opinion that CLCs should arrange for their learners to receive some form of certification of their attainments as a means of sustaining motivation and perseverance. In addition, he argues that it may be helpful to ensure that certification through a vocational skills programme (e.g. livelihood skills) is tied in with a national system of vocational qualifications, to enable learners who qualify, to seek employment (Oxenham, 2005:15). Oluoch (2005:3), on the other hand, argues that many CLCs in Kenya still lack a proper certification and accreditation system. He subsequently argues that the proficiency test certificates of those learners, who have gone through the vocational skills programme, cannot be used to get employment. The latter argument is not an international trend, but one based on findings from research done in Kenya (Oluoch, 2005:4).

Aitchison and Alidou (2009:37) argue that not all adult learners want to obtain a qualification and that many of them only come to learn relevant skills, e.g. livelihood and income-generating skills, to empower themselves economically so as to alleviate poverty and thereby sustaining their families.

### **2.7.6 Influence of policy and practice on PL**

Tikly, Lowe, Crossley, Dachi, Garret and Mukabaranga (2003:125) point out that the concept of 'lifelong learning' (LLL) is currently central to the development of policies for education and training. Wagner and Robert (2003:10) argue that the main reason why these policies are not implemented can be ascribed to competition for resources. They point out that 5% of educational budgets are spent on the 25-75% of the populations in need of increased literacy and livelihood skills. Oxenham (2005:17) argues that national policies acknowledge these needs, but most governments fail to allocate significant resources to them.

With the promulgation of the National Policy on Adult Learning, the Namibian government stated that one of the aims of the policy was to maximize the resources available for adult learning (Wagner & Robert, 2003:31). The latter policy resulted in the funding of no fewer than 32 directorates in 18 ministries and the establishment of an Adult Learning Council (ALC). The ALC would in the future primarily be financed out of public funds from the Adult Learning Promotion Fund. The Namibian



government decentralised the curriculum to community-based organisations with the promulgation of the National Qualification Scheme, so that the topics and content of materials will be localised, although the skills and competencies will be the same (Wagner & Robert, 2003:57).

In their study policies for skills development in Rwanda and Tanzania, Tikly et al. (2003) introduce the challenge of globalisation. According to them even poor, rural farmers and other workers and their families will feel the effects of shifts in world trading patterns and regulations and will need to respond to them through adjusting their own skills. Tikly's team identified nine groups of skills: three groups covering broadly life skills; the other six relating mainly to livelihood skills, both in the formal and informal sectors of employment. Oxenham (2005:12) argue that the force of globalisation underlines the need for policies and institutions to be alert for shifts in training needs and opportunities and respond to them accordingly.

According to Aitchison and Alidou (2009:56), research and evaluation findings on the influence of adult literacy and learning (ALE) on policy and practice in Africa are often received as bad news: inadequate policy provisions; inadequate funding; poor implementation; poorly specified goals; unplanned schemes of work; the need for regular training and capacity-building for personnel; poverty; lack of appropriate learning materials; and lack of learner motivation. The one obvious exception to these generalisations is the 2006 Kenya National Adult Literacy Survey which has had tremendous influences on ALE policy and practice in Kenya (Aitchison & Alidou, 2009:56). According to Aitchison & Alidou (2009:57), the latter national survey has influenced the initiation, development and implementation of Department of Adult Education programmes in the country.

## **2.8 SUMMARY**

From this discussion, it became evident that it is important to frame PL as part of economic and community development needs within a broader understanding of what it means to become literate in adulthood. It is also important to understand the differences in meaning and the relationships between the concepts *basic literacy*, *functional literacy*, *post-literacy*, *continuing education* and *vocational education*. The positioning of PL within formal, informal and non-formal education is also crucial for



economic development and sustaining communities. The important role of post-literacy in empowerment and environments that support PL, such as CLCs, cannot be underestimated. The securing of adequate funding from aid agencies, NGOs, communities and government are crucial to enable CLCs to develop, implement and sustain PL literacy programmes in a country. Additionally, the influence of national ALE policies should also not be underestimated, as it may lead to governments initiating, developing and implementing relevant PL programmes to address the PL needs of newly literate adult learners.

In Chapter 3 attention will be given to a discussion of the research design and method that were followed to investigate the research problem.

## **CHAPTER 3**

# **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter involves a discussion of the research methodology that was followed to investigate the research problem and to seek possible answers to my research question which can be articulated as: "What are the perceptions of newly literate adults in the PL programme at a rural community learning centre?"

### **3.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The curriculum at the SCLC addresses the educational needs of adult learners from a rural, farming community by offering formal education such as the basic literacy (ABET) programme and a post-literacy programme.

The basic literacy programme consists of learning areas such as Afrikaans Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC) and Numeracy at ABET Level 1, which is equivalent to Grades R-1 in primary school terms. According to the Western Cape Education Department (RSA, WCED) (2006:6a) Afrikaans LLC (at ABET Level 1) empower learners to:

- engage in a range of speaking and listening interactions, e.g. listen and respond to oral text and express opinions and feelings to the topic under discussion;
- read and respond to a range of texts types, e.g. understand the literal meaning of a text or relate to own experiences and knowledge; and
- write for a variety of different purposes and contexts, e.g. writes content that is consistent with the topic or organise and format text appropriate to the writing task.

Numeracy (at ABET Level 1) empowers learners to-

- demonstrate an understanding of and the use of the number system, e.g. counting and estimating amounts and the number of items up to 1 000 and recording the amounts in writing and orally; and
- to extract and use information from tables and to organize information into tables, e.g. extracting and recording data from simple mathematical tables (RSA, WCED, 2006b).

On the other hand, the PL programme consists of learning areas such as Afrikaans Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC) and Numeracy at ABET Level 2, which is equivalent to Grades 2-3 in primary school terms (RSA, WCED, 2006a; 2006b). These learning areas, which are similar to that in the basic literacy programme, aim at strengthening the gains from the basic literacy programme. A closer look at the ABET curriculum shows that it is reproducing the curriculum categories of schooling and this is done through the delivery of a national curriculum consisting mainly of school subjects (learning areas) from Grade R to Grade 9 (Nzimande, 2003:407).

**TABLE 3.1: The structure of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (adapted from RSA, DoE, 2006:2)**

NQF training band	School grades (phases)	ABET levels
General Education and Training (GET)	• Senior Phase (Grades 7-9)	ABET Level 4
	• Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6)	ABET Level 3
	• Reception year for Foundation Phase (Grades 2-3)	ABET Level 2
	• Provision for children from 2-6 years old (Grades R-1)	ABET Level 1

The NQF in Table 3.1 provides a developmental structure for learning in the South African context. Learning bands and ABET levels within the General Education and Training (GET) band are evident in the table. According to Nzimande (2003:407), CLCs in South Africa is modelled on the NQF levels which assume that adult learning and educational needs are similar to that of children. According to Conner (2004:1),

*pedagogy* literally means the art and science of educating children and is often used as a synonym for teaching. In addition, she argues that pedagogy embodies teacher-focused education where teachers assume responsibility for making decisions about what will be learned, how it will be learned, and when it will be learned (Conner, 2004). In contrast, Knowles (1984:56) states that andragogy, a theory of adult learning, "attempts to explain why adults learn differently to younger learners". Conner (2004:2) further argues that the sole difference is that children have fewer experiences and pre-established beliefs than adults and thus have less to relate to. Knowles (1984:57) adds to this that, because adult learners have a variety of life experiences, they are ready to learn those things that they need to know in order to cope effectively with life and work situations.

### **3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH**

I used a basic qualitative research approach to collect data. According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2005:74), this approach refers to research that elicits participant accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions through close interviews with a small, purposive sample, with the researcher trying to uncover the participant's beliefs and values that underlie the phenomenon being studied. Qualitative research usually involves fieldwork and the researcher must physically go to the participants or site to interview the samples (Merriam, 1998:6). In addition, Krathwohl (1993:29) argues that the core features of qualitative research are as follows:

1. It is conducted through an intense and/or prolonged contact with a field or life situation.
2. The researcher's role is to gain a holistic overview of the context under study.
3. A main task is to explicate the ways people in particular settings come to understand, account for action and otherwise manage their day to day situations.
4. Most of the analysis is done with words. These words can be organised to permit the researcher to contrast, compare, analyse and bestow patterns upon them.

5. In qualitative research there is an open agenda. The researcher interprets and contextualises the situation in an open manner.

The findings from my qualitative content analysis represented the collective experience of newly literate adult learners enrolled in the PL programme at the SCLC.

### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION**

I employed individual face-to-face interviews using semi-structured questions from an interview schedule which was developed for the purpose of this study. De Vos et al. (2005:296) are of the opinion that when constructing the interview schedule, the researcher should think about the broad range of question areas to be covered in the interview. Seven open-ended questions were asked which allowed the participants to express themselves freely to describe their perceptions regarding the PL programme at the SCLC (see Appendix F). Although all interviews were conducted in Afrikaans, all transcriptions of the interviews with participants were translated into English to facilitate the data analysis which is reported in English. Each interview began with the following questions:

1. "How would you describe the influence the PL programme on your life?"
2. "How would you describe the influence of the PL programme on your family?"
3. "How would you describe the influence of the PL programme on your community?"
4. "Why is PL important to you?"
5. "Which challenges have you experienced since you became involved in the PL programme?"
6. "How would you describe the influence of PL on your employment circumstances?"
7. "What would you like to change in the PL programme?"

Prompts such as, "Can you give an example of that?" and "Can you tell me more about that?" were used in order to elicit rich descriptions of experiences. The participants' own interpretation of these questions dictated the shape, course and content of the interviews.

Prior to the interviews I obtained consent from interviewees to use the tape recorder as a data collection tool. I also briefed them in advance about the range and variety of questions that would be set to them. All interviews (ten in total) were recorded on digital tape and transcribed verbatim. A tape recorder allows a much better record than notes taken during the interview (De Vos et al., 2005:298). Tape recording, however, has its disadvantages too, as participants may feel uncomfortable about their voices being taped and may even withdraw. Tape recorders should be placed inconspicuously so as not to unnerve participants (De Vos et al., 2005:298).

I selected a non-threatening environment which was easily accessible to the participants, and which provided privacy and seating arrangements that would encourage involvement and interaction. The transcribed interviews constructed the data for this study.

### **3.5 SAMPLING APPROACH**

I sampled the participants for the study in a purposive manner. This type of sample is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher, in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population (De Vos et al., 2005:202). The researcher should first think critically about the parameters of the population and then choose the sample case accordingly, because a clear identification of criteria for the selection of participants is of utmost importance (Creswell, 2009:118).

The participants selected needed to have the following characteristics:

- be an adult learner of the SCLC who completed the ABET programme and who was registered for the year 2009; or
- be an adult learner of the SCLC who was registered for 2010.

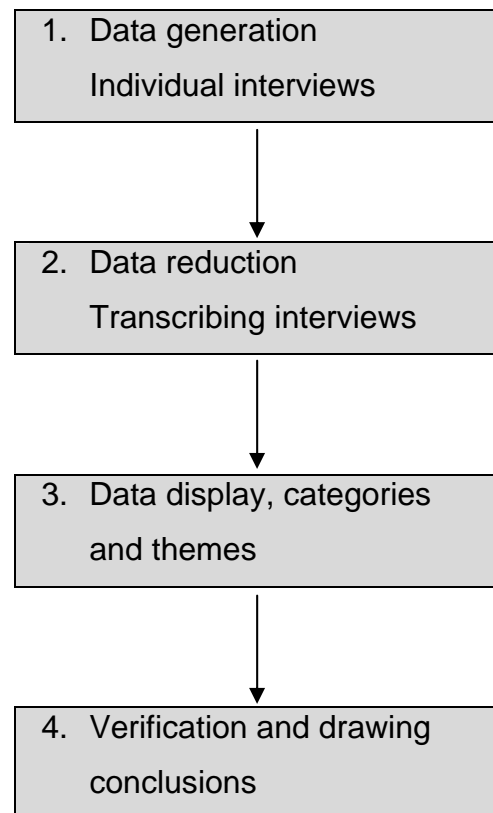
The participants included those who had completed the existing PL programme. This number is sufficient because it reflects the range of participants that make up the population so that others outside the sample might have a chance to connect to the experience of those in it (De Vos et al., 2005:294). As no more than 10 newly literate adult learners were enrolled in the PL programme at the SCLC from 2009-2010, the unit of analysis was therefore the ten individual participants.

### **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

In analysing the data, I used qualitative content analysis and attended to the emerging categories of description resulting from data generated from the interviewing questions. According Elo and Kyngäs (2008:109), content analysis is a method that may be used with either qualitative or quantitative data. The major benefit of content analysis is that it is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing a substantial amount of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Stemler, 2002:5).

In the current study, the researcher conducted the content analysis by grouping the data according to five categories, from which themes could be identified. In the current study, these categories covered the participants' views relating to their perceptions of the PL programme and provided a rich description. The method of analysis that the researcher adopted was based on a description of data analysis given in Miles and Huberman (1994:11). The authors suggest that following the process of the data generation, the analysis process consists of three activities, namely data reduction, data display and data verification. The following diagram (see figure 3.2) portrays the route of data analysis undertaken in this study:

**Figure 3.2: Route of data-analysis process (adapted from Miles & Huberman, 1994:11)**



In figure 3.2 arrows are used to show the route of the data analysis process undertaken during this research which started with the interviews and data generation. This was followed by the data reduction, which involved the transcription of all interviews. Then patterns of experiences were identified which were related to my research question. According to Engelbrecht, Swart and Eloff (2001:258), these patterns allow the researcher to identify categories within these broader patterns. Finally, through a process of clustering, this allows for themes to emerge, followed by the verification and drawing of conclusions. The data analysis process was also be aided by using a qualitative data analysis computer programme called HyperQual to identify, retrieve, isolate and regroup data according to the analytical process of content analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

My role as primary data collection instrument necessitated the identification of possible biases at the outset of the study (Creswell, 2009:196). In the case of the interviews, one possible source of bias was the asymmetrical relationship between



the interviewer and the participants. In this relationship the interviewer potentially has more power than the participants (Creswell, 2009:197). My position as centre manager of the SCLC may have been perceived by the adult participants as one of authority and power. The latter concern turned out not to be the case, as the participants did not perceive me as being authoritative, but one who respects them as equal human beings and who valued their input to address the research question. My experience of ten years in the field of Adult Education and appropriate knowledge and skills gained through my current post graduate studies, assisted me to understand the research problem. In terms of the interview content, biographical factors like age and gender may affect the results of the study. As I was 53 years old at the time of the study, in relation to the age of the interviewees, which ranged from 25 to 60, this did not affect the results of the study as I respected them as adults and my equals. It was important for me as the researcher using interviews, to incorporate the possible effect of the biographical variables and belief systems into my interpretations of the data (Nunan, 1992:150).

Although every effort was made to ensure that bias does not influence the study results, the above-mentioned biases could have shaped the way I viewed and understood the data I collected and the way I interpreted my experiences with the participants. The notion of intersubjectivity (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:121) was useful in addressing possible biases, as I needed to be sensitive to my insider-outsider status as researcher and the possible asymmetrical relationship between myself and the participants.

### **3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND RELIABILITY**

Leedy and Ormrod (2001:105) is of the opinion that the researcher should be convinced that the results from the data could be guaranteed to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness (validity) of the study. Merriam (1998:163) argues that the production of valid (trustworthy) and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner is at the heart of all research. In addition, Marshall and Rossman (1995) observe that all research must respond to canons that stand as criteria against which the trustworthiness of the project can be evaluated. They point out that these canons can be phrased as questions to which all research must respond. These canons are paraphrased by Marshall and Rossman (1995:143-145) as follows:

- How credible are the particular findings of the study? By what criteria can we judge them?
- How transferable and applicable are these findings to another setting or group of people?
- How can we reasonably sure that the findings would be replicated if the study were conducted with the same participants in the same context?
- How can we be sure that the findings would be reflective of the subjects and the inquiry itself, rather than a creation of the researcher's biases or prejudices?

In this study, the following steps had been taken to ensure internal trustworthiness:

- Fieldwork was carried out over three months.
- The researcher presented the interview schedule to an expert in the field, before the actual interviews, for possible comments in order to improve it.
- Immediately after recording the interviews on tape, the researcher provided an opportunity for each participant to revise or edit his or her interview.

External trustworthiness was obtained through sufficient and conclusive descriptions of data within a certain context. This will enable the reader to establish correlations and to determine to what extent the results of the study may be applicable to other participants in another context.

### **3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Prior to the study the participants were verbally informed regarding the aims and objectives of the study. Voluntary informed consent forms were signed by the participants immediately before the individual interviews. Since participation was voluntary, participants had the right to decline to participate after the study had commenced. Individual confidentiality was upheld using unmarked interview schedules and codes and by referring in reports to participants by way of pseudonyms.

As the SCLC is registered with the WCED, it was also necessary to get written consent from the WCED and the governing body of the SCLC. I also obtained ethical clearance from the University of Stellenbosch in the form of the established ethical clearance protocol (see Appendixes A, B, C & D).

### **3.9 SUMMARY**

This study aimed at investigating the perceptions of newly adult learners enrolled in the PL programme at the SCLC. A basic qualitative research approach to collect data was used. The participants for the study were identified in a purposive manner. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten participants to collect data. All interviews were recorded on digital tape and transcribed verbatim. The data analysis process was also aided by using of a qualitative data analysis computer programme called HyperQual to identify, retrieve, isolate and regroup data. Attention was also given to ethical considerations and biases which may affect the trustworthiness and reliability of the study.

In Chapter 4 attention will be given to a presentation and discussion of results based on data generated and analysed in this study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

# **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a presentation and discussion of results based on data generated and analysed in this study. The empirical research (i.e. the interviews) was undertaken from 9-12 May 2011 with 10 participants who were PL adult learners registered at the SCLC during 2009 and 2010.

The results of the interviews were derived from data collected from interviews by way of an interview schedule which was divided into Section A (Questions 1-4) about the demographic information of the participants and Section B (Questions 1-7) about the PL programme. In the analysis of the data from these interviews, there are frequent references to the participants using codes, for example, A1 will refer to the first participant's response to Question 1.

### **4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS**

The demographic information showed that the majority of the participants were employed, married and Afrikaans-speaking. Their ages ranged between 25 and 60 years. The sample was equally distributed in terms gender (see Appendix E). Even though not specifically asked in the interviews, the participants all resided in the Simondium area in the Drakenstein Municipality as recorded on their registration forms. They could all be classified as coloured under South African race classification systems.

### **4.3 CATEGORIES OF DESCRIPTION**

Five categories of description reflecting key variations of meaning emerged from the data. The commonalities and variations in participants' description are illustrated with excerpts from the transcripts. The quotes provide illustrative examples of the category that supplements the abstract description.

The categories are:

Category 1: Perceptions of PL participants of PL programme

Category 2: Importance of PL

Category 3: Challenges of PL securing employment

Category 4: Employment circumstances

Category 5: Changes to existing PL programme

#### **4.3.1 Perceptions of PL participants of PL programme**

This category is divided into sub-categories which are related to the perceptions of the PL participants regarding issues such as life changes, interactions with family members and involvement in communities since their enrolment in the PL programme.

##### **4.3.1.1 Life changes**

All participants responded positively to an enquiry whether their lives have changed since their enrolment in the PL programme. They had, however, different perceptions pertaining to life changes since enrolment in the PL programme. The PL programme helped them to develop self-confidence, which enabled them to improve their daily interaction with others, securing employment, studying further and managing financial matters as highlighted as follows. Participant E1 said: *...my self-image and self-confidence improved and it enabled him to stand in front of a group of people and talk to them in meetings*. Participants C1, H1 and I1 claimed that their self-confidence helped them during interviews to secure employment. Participants A1, D1, F1 and J1 declared that they had more confidence to study further. Participant B1, who was involved in a partnership with a friend, mentioned that *...my knowledge about numbers became very important for me. I used it to work out the income and expenditure of our business*. Participant G1, who got an opportunity to attend an entrepreneurial course, mentioned that *...I learnt a lot about how a person can start his own business*.

It seems that the PL programme assisted the participants to develop the self-confidence to manage their financial affairs better, secure employment, study further and it also improved their daily interaction with others.

#### **4.3.1.2 Interactions with family members**

The participants' responses varied in terms of how the PL programme changed the way they interacted with family members at home. The PL programme enabled some of them to help their children with their school-work as highlighted below:

*It enabled me to assist my children with their home work and school projects ... (A2)*

*I was also able to help my grand children with their home work (F2)*

The PL programme resulted in making the family and friends proud of them because of their involvement in the PL programme as highlighted in the following statements:

*My wife was very proud of me and my children looked at me differently because I was studying further (E2)*

*My girlfriend was very proud of me, as I was trying to improve my education ... (B2)*

*My children was very happy because their father was now able to read and write ... (I2)*

The PL programme assisted with the development of good understanding and support among family members to share domestic responsibilities as stated below:

*Our family had to learn to work together so that all domestic issues such as making supper and bathing my two children ... to enable me to attend night classes (C2)*

*The understanding between all family members was such that everyone supported me ... (J2)*

To the family of one participant it was very strange to see the father studying further:

*In the beginning it was very strange for my family to see me as a student*  
(H2)

It seems that the PL programme assisted participants to develop a sense of mutual support, pride, caring and understanding among family members so as to enable them to continue with their studies.

#### **4.3.1.3 Involvement in communities**

All participants agreed that the PL programme did have an influence on their different communities. The PL programme enabled some to talk to the youth in their communities about issues such as teenage pregnancies, alcohol abuse and unemployment as noted below:

*I warned young people about the dangers of unprotected sex which leads to teenage pregnancies (A3)*

*... having children at a very young age (C3)*

*It gave me the confidence to talk to the young boys in the neighbourhood about the danger of alcohol abuse ... (B3)*

*I talked to the youth about many issues such as, ... and unemployment (J3)*

The PL programme enabled some to educate the youth about voting procedures as noted in the following statements:

*I became involved in the municipal elections as a presiding officer and could use my reading and writing skills to explain the voting procedures to my community members (A3)*

*I talked to the youth about many issues such as voter education, ... (J3)*

It seems that by continually using their FL skills the participants did not only benefit themselves, but also the community as a whole.

#### **4.3.2 Importance of PL**

This category is related to the importance of PL to the participants since their enrolment in the PL programme.

In response to an enquiry about the importance of PL to the participants, some said they realised that other skills besides reading and writing are needed to achieve personal goals as illustrated by the following statements:

*A person must for example be able to fill in an application for housing, drawing up their home budgets and making sure that they get the correct change (D4)*

*A person must be able to read and write so that you can use an ATM to withdraw money (E4)*

*A person must be able to fill in an application form when he applies for an ID (I4)*

The ability to read and write enabled participants to apply functional literacy skills in their daily lives as noted by the following statements:

*With language you are able to read the traffic signs (F4)*

*... if you cannot read or write, you will not be able to read your Bible (G4)*

It seems that the participants viewed PL as functional literacy as it helped them to learn new skills alongside their basic literacy skills and to use it confidently in their daily lives so as to meet present and future challenges.

#### **4.3.3 Challenges of PL**

This category relates to the challenges of PL to the participants since their enrolment in the PL programme.



In response to an enquiry about the participants' challenges since becoming involved in the PL programme, they declared that they experienced certain transport, family, working schedule and financial difficulties which are highlighted below:

### **1. Transport**

Participant A5 mentioned that...*transport to and from the centre was a challenge.* Both participants B5 and H5 claimed that...*transport became a problem when my car broke down.*

### **2. Financial**

Participant D5 said: ... *I could not pay my school fees and I reached out to others ... to assist me financially,* while participant E5 mentioned that ....*finance were a big problem for me.*

### **3. Family**

Participant C5 claimed that... *I had to make certain sacrifices ... leaving my two boys with my mother....,* while participant G5 mentioned that...*I had to speak to my husband and children ... the different duties at home, such as making supper and washing of dishes needed to be divided between them.*

### **4. Working schedules**

Participant F5 stressed that... *I had to rearrange my work schedule... to get to classes on time.*

From the above it became clear that some participants experienced transport, financial, family and working schedule problems, since they became involved in the PL programme.

#### **4.3.4 Employment circumstances**

This category relates to the employment circumstances of PL participants since their enrolment in the PL programme.

Regarding those participants who were employed, the following statements support the finding that participants perceived a positive influence on their employment circumstances:

### **1. Communication**

Participant B6 claimed that ... *I was able to manage the money better ... and it also enabled me to communicate better with our clients.* Participant E6 said: ... *I was able to communicate better with my fellow workers.*

### **2. Administrative**

Participant D6 mentioned that ... *I could plan my work better and do tasks much faster,* while participant I6 declared that ... *I became more effective in my job as an administrative assistant.*

### **3. Dedication**

Participant G6 declared that ... *I became more dedicated in my work and I could do more.*

### **4. Inspiration**

Participant H6 said: ... *through my studies I served as a role model for the cleaning staff at school ... I inspired some of them also to register as students at the centre.*

It seems that the participants felt that the PL programme had a positive influence on their jobs, because it improved their communication and administrative skills. The PL programme also resulted in some participants becoming more dedicated in their work, and inspiring fellow staff members also to register at the centre.

#### **4.3.5 Changes to existing PL programme**

This category is related to the perceptions of the PL participants regarding changes to the PL programme since their enrolment in the PL programme.

In response to an enquiry about changes to the PL programme, the participants had different views. The participants wanted access to a variety of PL programmes as highlighted as follows:

### **1. Computer Literacy**

Participant A7 said: .... *I would like to see that computer literacy programmes are included, because without it knowledge of computers it is difficult to get a job today,* while participant C7 claimed that....*computer literacy ... will enable learners to secure better employment.* Participant J7 stressed that ....*computer literacy is basically a prerequisite for any job today.*

### **2. Health Care**

Participant D7 declared that .....*I would like to see that programmes such as First Aid and Primary Health Care are introduced to enable learners to care for sick elderly people.*

### **3. Environmental Studies**

Participant E7 mentioned that...*I want to see that a programme about global warming is included ... to make learners aware of ... climate changes.*

### **4. Agriculture and Food Security**

Participant F7 stressed that: ...*I would like to see that agriculture is introduced ... it will empower people with knowledge to produce their own fruit and vegetables ... to generate an income.*

### **5. Entrepreneurship**

Participant H7 claimed that ...*I would like to see that programmes such as ... entrepreneurship is introduced ...it will enable students to start their own businesses.*

It therefore became clear that it seems that participants want access to a variety of non-formal education programmes like computer literacy, health care, environmental studies, agriculture, food security and entrepreneurship which may facilitate sustaining communities and economic development.

## **4.4 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS BASED ON DATA FROM THE INTERVIEWS WITH ADULT LEARNERS**

From the results based on the data five categories of description came to the fore, namely the perceptions of PL participants of the PL programme, importance of PL, challenges of PL, employment circumstances and changes to PL provision. These categories will be discussed in the following section.

### **4.4.1 Perceptions of PL participants of PL programme**

#### ***4.4.1.1 Life changes***

Data analysis (see 4.3.1.1) has shown that the PL programme assisted with the development of self-confidence among participants which empowered them psychologically to manage their financial affairs better, secure employment, study further and it also improved their daily interaction with others. Recent literature suggests that the most common type of empowerment is identified as feelings of self-esteem and self-confidence, which indicates that literacy often, leads to psychological empowerment (Stromquist, 2009). Evans, Waite and Admasachew (2009) argue that high levels of self-confidence played an important role in achieving literacy programme outcomes relating to the acquisition of employment skills in developing countries.

#### ***4.4.1.2 Interaction with family members***

After analysing the data (see 4.3.1.2), it became evident that the PL programme assisted participants to develop a sense of mutual support, pride, caring and understanding among family members so as to enable participants to continue with their studies. In addition to the PL programme, Oxenham (2004:17) proposes family literacy programmes to enable parents, especially mothers, to take a more supportive role in their children's schooling. Torres (2004:16), adds to this the importance of

learning in the family, in the community, at work, with friends, through the mass media, learning by observing, by doing, by teaching and participating.

#### **4.4.1.3 *Involvement in communities***

Data analysis (see 4.3.1.3) has shown that by continually using their functional literacy (FL) skills the participants did not only benefit themselves, but they also had a positive influence on the community as a whole. According to UNESCO (2005:151), a functionally literate person is someone who continues to use reading, writing and calculation for his own development as well as that of the community. The participants declared that these FL skills enabled them to address socio-economic issues like teenage pregnancies, alcohol abuse and unemployment. Leowarin (2010:7) argues that PL programmes should be integrated with other development programmes-such as agriculture, community development, health and HIV/Aids-into the teaching-learning process.

#### **4.4.2 Importance of PL**

Regarding the analysis of the importance of PL (see 4.3.2) the participants viewed basic literacy as a prerequisite for PL and personal development to occur. PL was also viewed as functional literacy as it helped them to learn new skills alongside their basic literacy skills and to use these confidently in their daily lives so as to meet present and future challenges. According to Guodong and Zhupeng (2003:626), PL serves the needs of newly literate adults by consolidating the gains of basic literacy, promoting economic and social development in order to meet the challenges of present and future societies, especially in rural areas.

#### **4.4.3 Challenges of PL**

The analysis of data regarding the challenges participants face after they had become involved in the PL programme (see 4.3.3), showed that the majority of participants experienced transport, financial and family challenges, while the minority had to adjust their working schedules since becoming involved in the PL programme. Oxenham (2005:14) argues that one of the major factors for the high attrition rates of faltering adult learners can largely be ascribed to transport problems and inadequate budgets.

#### **4.4.4 Employment circumstances**

From the data analysis (see 4.3.4) it became evident that the majority of participants felt that the PL programme had a positive influence on their jobs, because it improved their communication and administrative skills. The PL programme also resulted in the minority of the participants to become more dedicated in their work, while others inspired fellow staff members also to register at the centre. Rogers (2002:162) is of the opinion that it is not only the basic literacy skills that will ensure the success of a PL programme, but also the applicability of PL in everyday and occupational life.

#### **4.4.5 Changes to existing PL programme**

From the analysis pertaining to the question what the participants would like to change in the PL programme (see 4.3.5), it became evident that they want access to a variety of non-formal education programmes like health care, environmental studies, agriculture and food security as well as formal education programmes such as computer literacy and entrepreneurship which may facilitate sustaining communities and economic development.

### **4.5 SUMMARY**

After presenting and discussing the results based on data generated and analyzed in this study, it became evident that PL participants' perceptions of the PL programme, the importance of PL, challenges of PL, employment conditions and changes to the existing PL programme were all critical issues that the participants wanted to be addressed in order to ensure the delivery of quality PL programmes in CLCs.

In Chapter 5 attention will be given to the implications that the reported results may have for theory, policy and practice.

## **CHAPTER 5**

# **FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the main findings and conclusions are summarised and possible recommendations are discussed.

The research question on which this study focused on is as follows: "What are the perceptions of newly literate adults in the PL programme at a rural community learning centre?"

To answer this question, the researcher used a basic qualitative research approach to collect data. The research was based on individual interviews with ten newly literate adult learners to uncover personal experiences about the PL programme at the SCLC.

### **5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

Chapter one attempted to provide a background for the research and to clarify the research problem, the aim, objectives, rationale and possible contribution of the study.

Chapter two consisted of the outline of the conceptual framework by providing an exploration of the literature study with regard to information of relevant literature study that presents a scholarly view on the research problem. Aspects such as key terminology, the positioning of PL within the different education systems and the role of PL in empowerment and environments that may support PL, were also explored. An exploration of literacy skills training and community development initiatives in a South African context, were also provided in this chapter.

In chapter three the implementation of the research methodology was introduced. The researcher used a qualitative research approach to collect data. Data was

generated by means of semi-structured interviews and measures were taken to support the trustworthiness and reliability of the data.

In chapter four the raw data that were generated through semi-structured interviews were presented and analysed according to the categories in which the questions were grouped and analysed. A summary of the main findings and conclusions emerging from the research project will now be discussed.

## **5.3 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.3.1 Perceptions of PL participants of the PL programme**

From the presentation and discussion of results based on the interviews with adult learners, it became evident that the PL programme at the SCLC did not only have a positive influence on their personal, family and community lives, but also on their employment circumstances and challenges of PL.

The PL programme made participants realise the importance of numeracy skills in managing financial matters in business and the application thereof in their daily lives. It further assisted with the development of self-confidence among participants which empowered them psychologically to achieve personal goals and it resulted in family members sharing domestic duties at home, enabled participants to help their children with school-work, fostered pride and understanding, and improved communication. This finding is important because it not only enabled participants to continue their involvement in the PL programme, but it also led to supportive and caring relationships between all family members which may be conducive to a culture of teaching and learning in a family context. By continually using their reading, writing and numeracy skills in their daily lives, the participants did not only benefit themselves, but also other members in the community. It also motivated them to address socio-economic issues such as, teenage pregnancies, alcohol abuse and unemployment.

Their involvement in the PL programme enabled participants to use their literacy, numeracy and life skills in combination with work and management skills to improve their efficiency during the execution of tasks. This also led the participants to inspire fellow workers to become involved in the PL programme. However, the participants



experienced transport and financial problems and had to adapt their working schedules and family responsibilities to enable them to attend evening classes at the SCLC.

In the next section a discussion of the perceived gaps in the PL provision at the SCLC, which became evident from the results, will follow.

### **5.3.2 Gaps in the PL provision**

The participants wanted a variety of changes to the PL programme. Some wanted the introduction of non-formal education programmes focused on health care, environmental studies, agriculture and food security together with formal education programmes such as programmes focusing on computer literacy and entrepreneurship. In addition, literature suggests that CLCs should also include non-formal education programmes, similar to that of the Adult Literature and Skills Training Programme (ALSTP), into their PL programmes, such as income-generation, human rights, gender relations, conflict management and resolution (UNESCO, 2008:2). According to UNESCO (2008:4), the ALSTP endeavours to address learners' needs and thereby empowering themselves cognitively, socially, economically and politically.

In addition, literature suggest that despite the positive impact that the ALSTP has had, its success continues to be marred primarily by lack of adequate funding (UNESCO, 2008:9). To counter the latter concern, Oluoch (2005:5), proposes that where possible, communities, aid agencies, NGOs and government can be approached to fund the CLCs so as to ensure that PL programmes are sustainable in meeting learners' needs and thereby empowering them holistically.

## **5.4 IMPLICATIONS**

After considering the conclusions based on the findings, possible implications for improving PL programmes, policy and practice and future research are discussed in this section.

### 5.4.1 Implications for improving PL programmes

It seems that the current PL programme at the SCLC, consisting of learning areas such as Afrikaans LLC and Numeracy in ABET Level 2 (Grades 2-3), do not meet the needs of the PL participants. According to Nzimande (2003:407), the latter suggestion can be ascribed to the fact that many CLCs in South Africa are modelled on the NQF levels, which assume that adult learning and educational needs are similar to that of children (pedagogic model). What is recommended at the SCLC is an andragogic model where adults take responsibility for their own (self-directed) learning. The andragogic model asserts that six issues be considered and addressed in formal and non-formal adult education programmes, namely:

1. Need to know - adults need to know why they should learn something, meaning the reason why they need to learn something or how it will benefit them;
2. Self-concept - adults fight against others imposing their wills on them, but having been conditioned through the national schools system of a dependant learner, they need to be moved into a self-directed learner where they are responsible for their own learning and the direction it takes;
3. Role of experience – adult's experience should be used in their new learning and the technique should include their knowledge as a tool that they can draw upon and also provide engagement by acknowledge them for their experiences;
4. Readiness to learn – adults seek out learning as a way to better with real life tasks and problems;
5. Orientation to learning – the new learning should clearly define how the new learning will apply to their life in some fashion; and
6. Motivation to learn – internal motivators are more important than external motivators that adults may receive for more learning. These internal motivators can come in the form of increased job satisfaction, self-esteem and quality of life (Yannacci, Kristin & Ganju, 2006:6).

The implication of the aforementioned discussion is that the PL programme at the SCLC should include other learning programmes beside the basic literacy programme.

#### **5.4.2 Implications for policy and practice**

Research conducted by Baatjes and Mathe (2004) has shown that PL is not viewed as a government priority and a gap continues to exist between what PL programmes offer and what the newly literate adults may need. South African policy makers need to take heed of research conducted in other developing countries like Namibia (Wagner & Robert, 2003) and Rwanda and Tanzania (Tikly et al., 2003) regarding the development of educational policies to address the educational needs of adult learners after the basic literacy education programme had been completed.

In addition, literature suggests that research conducted by Aitchison and Alidou (2009), has shown that the evaluation findings on the influence of adult literacy and learning (ALE) on policy and practice in Africa are often received as bad news - characterised by inadequate policy provisions, inadequate funding, poor implementation, poorly specified goals, unplanned schemes of work, the need for capacity-building for personnel, poverty and lack of learner motivation. Aitchison & Alidou (2009:56) argues that the only exception to these generalisations is the 2006 Kenya National Adult Literacy Survey, which has influenced the initiation, development and implementation of Department of Adult Education programmes in the country.

#### **5.4.3 Implications for future research**

From the above-mentioned findings and conclusions, a number of implications arose.

##### ***5.4.3.1 Limitations of the study***

Since only one CLC participated in the study, perceptions and points of view with regard to the PL needs of newly literate adult learners involved in the PL programme to a wider group of CLCs could not be taken into account. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to a greater population.

#### **5.4.3.2 Recommendations**

It is recommended that a developmental study be done among a wider group of CLCs so as to address the inclusion of non-formal and vocational programmes into their curriculums and thereby extending trustworthiness.

### **5.5 CONCLUSION**

From this discussion it became evident that the PL programme at the SCLC did not only have a positive influence on the participants' personal, family and community lives, but also on their employment circumstances and challenges of PL.

The PL programme also motivated participants to address socio-economic issues such as, teenage pregnancies, alcohol abuse and unemployment. The PL programme further assisted with the development of self-confidence among participants, which empowered them psychologically to manage their financial affairs better, secure employment, study further and it also improved their daily interaction with others. The PL programme assisted participants to develop a sense of mutual support, pride, caring and understanding among family members who empowered them socially to enable participants to continue with their studies.

By continually using their functional literacy (FL) skills the participants did not only benefit themselves, but they also had a positive influence on the community as a whole. Their involvement in the PL programme empowered participants cognitively to use their literacy, numeracy and life skills in combination with work and administrative skills to improve their efficiency during the execution of tasks. However, the participants experienced transport and financial problems and had to adapt their working schedules and family responsibilities to enable them to attend evening classes at the SCLC.

It also became evident that the participants wanted a variety of other learning programmes beside the basic literacy programme such as health care, environmental studies, agriculture, food security, computer literacy and entrepreneurship which may facilitate sustaining communities and economic development. The important role of PL in empowerment and environments that support PL, such as CLCs, cannot be underestimated.

It can therefore be concluded that the aim of the study and the primary research question which was explored, namely: "What are the perceptions of newly literate adults in the PL programme at a rural community learning centre? were well addressed and answered.

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## APPENDIX A

### Informed consent letter from the participants



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSIT  
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

#### INWILLIGING OM DEEL TE NEEM AAN NAVORSING

---

Geagte Deelnemer

My naam is Jeremy Mark Van Wyk, 'n Magistersgraad (MPhil in Lewenslange Leer) student aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch. Ek is tans besig met navorsing gebasseer op die volgende onderwerp:

*Die na-geletterdheidspersepsies van nuut geletterde volwasse leerders by 'n landelike gemeenskapleersentrum*

Die resultate van die studie sal deel word van 'n navorsingstesis. U is geselekteer vanaf 'n lys van volwasse leerders aan Simondium Gemeenskapleersentrum (SGLS) wat reeds die na-geletterdheidsprogram voltooi het. U sieninge en opinies is belangrik vir die studie en ek sal u bereidwilligheid om aan hierdie studie deel te neem opreg waardeer.

#### 1. DOEL VAN DIE STUDIE

Die hoofdoelwit van die hierdie studie is om die post-geletterdheid (PG) persepsies van nuut geletterde volwassenes in die PG program by SGLS te identifiseer. Die spesifieke doelwitte sluit in:

- Om die persepsies van nuut geletterde volwassenes rakende die invloed van die PG program op hul lewens te identifiseer.
- Om die behoeftes van nuut geletterde volwassenes te ondersoek.
- Om gapings in PG voorsiening te identifiseer.
- Om die riglyne vir die verbetering van die PG program vir nuut geletterde volwassenes te voorsien.

#### 2. PROSEDURES

Indien u inwillig om aan die studie deel te neem, vra ons dat u die volgende moet doen:

- 2.1 Inwillig tot 'n individuele onderhoud met die navorser, wat moontlik een uur kan duur.
- 2.2 Die onderhoud met die navorser sal deur middel van 'n digitale bandopnemer opgeneem word.
- 2.3 Die bandopnemer sal onopsigtelik geplaas word sodat dit u nie sal ontsenu nie.
- 2.4 Hierdie onderhoud sal plaasvind te SGLS, in 'n vertrek wat privaat en veilig vir die deelnemer sal wees.

### **3. MOONTLIKE RISIKO'S EN ONGEMAKLIKHEID:**

Dit mag dalk ongemaklik wees om oor persoonlike ervarings te praat. Die navorser is opgelei in onderhoudstegnieke en sal dus 'n atmosfeer skep om elke deelnemer op sy/haar gemak te laat voel.

### **MOONTLIKE VOORDELE VIR DEELNEMERS EN/OF VIR DIE SAMELEWING**

Daar is geen direkte bevoordeling verbonde vir u deelname aan hierdie studie nie. Die samelewing mag egter voordeel trek uit die navorsing deurdat dit moontlik kan bydra tot die ontwikkeling van 'n meer leerder-gesentreerde PG program wat die persepsies van nuut geletterde volwasse leerders te SGLS sal aanspreek, of selfs soortgelyke gemeenskapleersentrums in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks.

### **4. VERGOEDING VIR DEELNAME**

Deelnemers aan die studie sal geen vergoeding ontvang nie.

### **5. VERTROULIKHEID**

Enige inligting wat deur middel van die navorsing verkry word en wat met u in verband gebring kan word, sal vertroulik bly en slegs met u toestemming bekend gemaak word of soos deur die wet vereis. Vertroulikheid sal gehandhaaf word deur van skuilname gebruik te maak. Data sal bewaar word op rekenaar wat met 'n wagwoord verwerk sal word. Slegs die navorser en studieleier sal toegang tot die data hê.

Na afloop van die onderhoude, wat op band opgeneem sal word, sal die navorser die deelnemer 'n kans gee om die onderhoud te hersien of te redigeer. Slegs die navorser sal toegang hê tot die bande. Die bande sal skoongevee word na die suksesvolle voltooiing van die navorsingstesis.

### **6. DEELNAME EN ONTTREKKING**

U kan self besluit of u aan die studie wil deelneem of nie. Indien u inwillig om aan die studie deel te neem, kan u te eniger tyd u daaraan onttrek sonder enige nadelige gevolge. U kan ook weier om op bepaalde vrae te antwoord, maar steeds aan die studie deelneem. Die ondersoeker kan u aan die studie onttrek indien omstandighede dit noodsaaklik maak.

## 7. IDENTIFIKASIE VAN NAVORSER

Indien u enige vrae of bekommernis omtrent die identiteit van die navorser het, staan dit u vry om te skakel met Jeremy Mark Van Wyk, 0824366393, of die studieleier, dr. BL Frick, 021 8083807.

## 8. REGTE VAN DEELNEMER

U kan te eniger tyd u inwilliging terugtrek en u deelname beëindig, sonder enige nadelige gevolge vir u. Deur deel te neem aan die navorsing doen u geensins afstand van enige wetlike regte, eise of regsmiddel nie. Indien u vrae het oor u regte as deelnemer by navorsing, skakel met Me. Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] van die Afdeling Navorsingsontwikkeling.

## 9. TEN SLOTTE

Dit sal my vir my 'n groot voorreg wees om u as deel van my studie te hê. Dui asseblief u bereidwilligheid aan om deel te neem deur u handtekening hieronder aan te bring. Indien u nie wil deelneem nie, handig asseblief hierdie vorm ongeteken terug.

### VERKLARING DEUR DEELNEMER

Die bostaande inligting is aan my, ....., gegee en verduidelik deur ..... in Afrikaans en ek is dié taal magtig. Ek is die geleentheid gebied om vrae te stel en dit is tot my bevrediging beantwoord.

Ek wil hiermee vrywillig in om deel te neem aan die studie. 'n Afskrif van hierdie vorm is aan my gegee.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Handtekening van deelnemer**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Datum**

### VERKLARING DEUR NAVORSER

Ek verklaar dat ek die inligting in hierdie dokument vervat verduidelik het aan..... Hy/Sy is aangemoedig en oorgenoeg tyd gegee om vrae aan my te stel. Dié gesprek is in Afrikaans gevoer.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Handtekening van navorser**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Datum**

Goedgekeur Subkomitee A 25 Oktober 2004



## APPENDIX B

### Consent letter from the Governing Body of Simondium Community Learning Centre

1



**SIMONDIUM GEMEENSKAPLEERSENTRUM**

Geagte Meneer JM Van Wyk 10 Januarie 2011

Hiermee verleen ons toestemming dat Meneer Jeremy Mark Van Wyk, MPhil - Student aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch, sy navorsings-onderzoek met 10 leerders van Simondium Gemeenskapleersentrum mag doen.

Ons wens u alle sterkte toe met u studies.

  
.....  
H. Joubert (Mnr.)  
VOORSITTER  
BEHEERLIGGAAM SIMONDIUM GEMEENSKAPLEERSENTRUM

Posadres  
Posbus 139  
SIMONDIUM  
7670  
: 0824366393  
E-pos  
[jerry mark@telkomsa.net](mailto:jerry mark@telkomsa.net)

## APPENDIX C

### Consent letter from the Western Cape Education Department



Navrae  
Enquiries **Dr RS Cornelissen**  
*/Mibuzo*  
Telefoon  
Telephone (021) 467-2286  
*/Foni*  
Faks  
Fax (021) 425-7445  
*/Feksi*

Verwysing  
Reference 20100528-0038  
*/Salathiso*

Mr Jeremy Van Wyk  
45 Olienhout Avenue  
New Orleans  
PAARL  
7646

**Dear Mr J. Van Wyk**

#### **RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE POST-LITERACY NEEDS OF NEWLY LITERATE ADULT LEARNERS AT A RURAL COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE.**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. The programmes of Educators are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **31<sup>st</sup> May 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2011.**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as submitted to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services; Western Cape Education Department  
Private Bag X9114; CAPE TOWN; 8000**

We wish you success in your research.

**Signed:** Ronald S. Cornelissen

for: **HEAD: EDUCATION** DATE: **28<sup>th</sup> May 2010**

## APPENDIX D

### Letter of ethics clearance from the Stellenbosch University



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

3 May 2011

Tel.: 021 - 808-9183  
Enquiries: Sidney Engelbrecht  
Email: [sidney@sun.ac.za](mailto:sidney@sun.ac.za)

Reference No. 517/2011

Mr JM van Wyk  
Department of Curriculum Studies  
University of Stellenbosch  
**STELLENBOSCH**  
7602

Mr JM van Wyk

#### LETTER OF ETHICS CLEARANCE

With regards to your application, I would like to inform you that the project, *The post-literacy needs of newly literate adult learners at a rural community learning centre*, has been approved on condition that:

1. The researcher/s remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal;
2. The researcher/s stay within the boundaries of applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines, and applicable standards of scientific rigor that are followed within this field of study and that
3. Any substantive changes to this research project should be brought to the attention of the Ethics Committee with a view to obtain ethical clearance for it.

We wish you success with your research activities.

Best regards



*Sidney Engelbrecht*  
**MR SF ENGELBRECHT**

Secretary: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanoria)



**APPENDIX E****Demographic information of participants (A-J)**

<b>PARTICIPANT</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>SEX</b>	<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>	<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>
<b>A</b>	40	Female	Married	Unemployed
<b>B</b>	27	Male	Unmarried, but involved in a long-term relationship	Employed
<b>C</b>	25	Female	Single	Employed
<b>D</b>	45	Female	Single	Employed
<b>E</b>	43	Male	Married	Employed
<b>F</b>	60	Male	Married	Employed
<b>G</b>	49	Female	Married	Employed
<b>H</b>	48	Male	Married	Employed
<b>I</b>	51	Male	Married	Employed
<b>J</b>	43	Female	Married	Unemployed

## APPENDIX F

### Interview schedule for qualitative interviews with participants

**ONDERHOUDSVRAE:** Die onderhoud sal semi-gestruktureerd wees, maar deur die onderstaande vrae gerig word:

#### A. DEMOGRAFIESE INLIGTING

- A. Wat is jou naam? .....
- B. Hoe oud is jy? .....
- C. Wat is jou huwelikstatus? (getroud; ongetroud, maar in 'n lang verhouding betrokke; geskei; enkellopend) .....
- D. Werk jy tans? Ja/Nee? .....

#### B. INLIGTING IN VERBAND MET DIE POST-GELETTERDHEIDS(PG)-PROGRAM

- 1. Hoe sou jy die invloed van die PG-program op jou lewe beskryf?  
.....
- 2. Hoe sou jy die invloed van die PG-program op jou familie beskryf?  
.....
- 3. Hoe sou jy die invloed van die PG-program op jou gemeenskap beskryf?  
.....
- 4. Waarom is PG vir jou belangrik?  
.....
- 5. Watter uitdagings het jy beleef sedert jy by die PG-program betrokke geraak het?  
.....
- 6. Hoe sou jy die invloed van PG op jou werksomstandighede beskryf?  
.....
- 7. Wat sou jy graag in die PG-program wou verander?  
.....

**APPENDIX G****Learner enrolment in the post-literacy programme at Simondium Community Learning Centre (2006-2010)****SIMONDIUM GEMEENSKAPLEERSENTRUM**

Posadres:  
Posbus 139  
SIMONDIUM  
7670

Tel. 021-8741786  
Selfoon: 0826870355

**VIR WIE DIT MAG AANGAAN****INSAKE: LEERDERINSKRYWING IN DIE NA-GELETTERDHEIDSKLAS (ABET VLAK-2) VIR DIE TYDPERK 2006-2010**

Graag wens ek, as ondergetekende, om 'n samevatting van bogenoemde leerderinskrywing vir die genoemde tydperk aan u deur te gee.

Jaar	Vroulik	Manlik	Totaal
2006	15	7	22
2007	13	6	19
2008	10	3	13
2009	7	3	10
2010	7	2	9
<b>Groot Totaal</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>73</b>

Die uwe

.....*H.M. Joubert*.....

**H. JOUBERT**  
(Voorsitter BHL.)

22/01/2011